

Frugal Photographer™

How to load your 127 film into your camera

We continue to support photographers who use 127 cameras, with black and white film, color slide film and slide mounts, and color print reloads.

Even if your 127 camera does not resemble the one pictured here, these instructions should help you understand how to load and use your camera.



Your camera will have a supply chamber, which holds the unexposed film. It will have a take-up chamber, where you advance the film as you expose it. They will be on opposite sides of the film plane.

The film advance knob's shaft protrudes into the take-up chamber.

You will need an empty film spool.



Note that the slot in the end of the empty film spool must mate with the blade on the film advance shaft.

Insert the empty spool into the take-up chamber, where it will act as the take-up spool as you expose and advance your film.



Remove and discard the paper seal from your roll of film.



Hold the roll of film so it does not spontaneously uncoil.

Note how the backing paper tongue mates with the slot in the take-up spool.



Insert the roll of film into the supply chamber. Press it with a finger or thumb so it does not spontaneously uncoil. Pull out about 10cm (4 inches) of the backing paper and draw it across the film plane.



Insert the tongue into the take-up spool slot. Continue to maintain light pressure on the roll of film so it does not spontaneously uncoil. Turn the film advance knob so it grips the backing paper, and begin advancing the film into the take-up chamber.



This illustrates how the film feeds from the supply chamber (on the left in this camera), across the film plane, and onto the take-up spool. The word "start" tells you that you are at the beginning of the roll.



Advance the film until the start position arrows are approximately at the edge of the film plane.

If you advance much beyond this point, you may inadvertently expose your film to light.



From this point on, your film must be enclosed within your camera and protected from light.



Advance the film slowly while watching the red window. You will see indicators that warn you to be careful because a number is just about to appear.

Then the number 1 will appear, which means the film is in position for exposure number 1.



Depending on your camera, you will get 8, 12, or 16 exposures per roll. If your camera gives you square images, then exposure number 12 will be the last one on the roll.



When you have exposed the last frame, wind the film all the way forward. Remove it from the camera and use the supplied gummed seal to seal it shut. Leave the empty spool in the camera for use as your next takeup spool.

All film undergoes significantly faster chemical change after exposure than before, so if you cannot process your film promptly (within a few days or weeks), refrigerate it in a sealed plastic container or zip-lock type bag.

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